

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2017

The Honorable Tom Graves, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
2000 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Quigley:

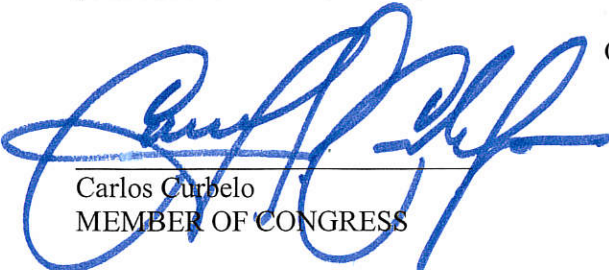
As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2018 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill we respectfully request that you provide increased funding for the Internal Revenue Service Office of Taxpayer Services, including the Community Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) grants, Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC), and Taxpayer Advocate Service. The work being done with funds provided for Taxpayer Services is commendable and worthy of your full and fair consideration.

Both the VITA and TCE programs are specifically targeted to ensure tax payers have access to services where they can confidently file returns without fear of being scammed by fraudulent preparers. For example, VITA organizes IRS-certified volunteers who offer free tax services to individuals with an annual income of less than \$54,000 and those with limited proficiency in English. The number of tax returns prepared by the VITA program increased 100 percent between the 2014 (1.9 million) and 2016 (3.8 million) tax filing seasons. Of equal importance is the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program which specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to taxpayers who are age 60 and older. TCE, like VITA, has served as an invaluable asset to numerous underserved communities and has played a prominent role in allowing a greater number of taxpayers to file electronically. In the 2016 tax filing season, VITA and TCE programs filed more than 3.8 million Federal income tax returns.


The Taxpayer Advocate Service is an independent organization within the IRS that provides assistance to individuals, businesses, and tax-exempt organizations who need help navigating the IRS. The Taxpayer Advocate Service administers the LITC, which leverage federal investment with private matching grants to assist vulnerable taxpayers. In 2016, over 138 grantees located in 49 states and the District of Columbia helped protect taxpayers who were low-income or had limited English proficiency better understand their rights and responsibilities.

Funding for these essential services has received bipartisan support under both Republican and Democratic Administrations. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have continued to include strong funding for taxpayer services regardless of which party is in the majority. We appreciate your past support of these programs, and respectfully ask that you increase funding for the I.R.S. Office of Taxpayer Services programs in FY18, including Low Income Taxpayer Clinics, Community Volunteer Income Tax Assistance matching grants, Tax Counseling for the Elderly, and Taxpayer Advocate Service. These programs have already proven to assist the most vulnerable in our country and we thank you for your consideration of this request.

Cordially,



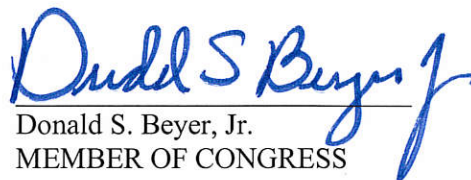
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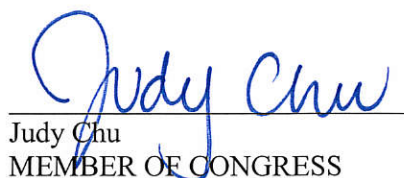
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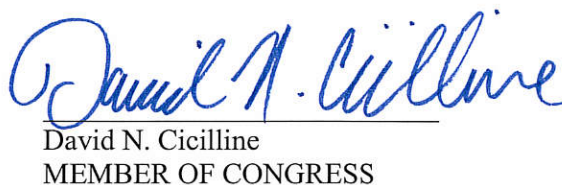
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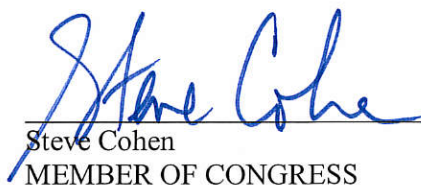
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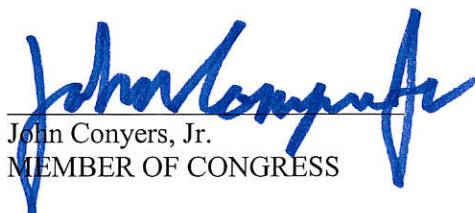
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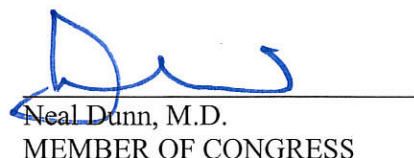
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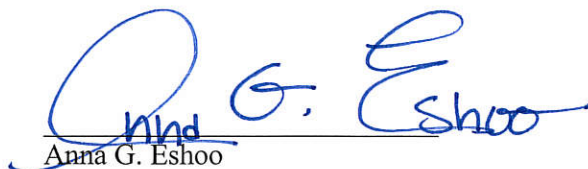
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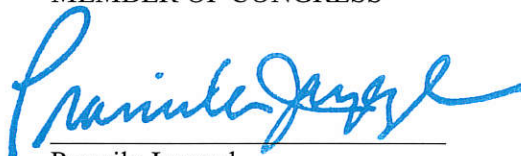
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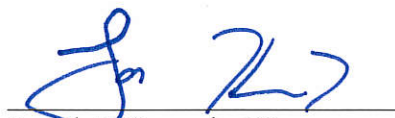
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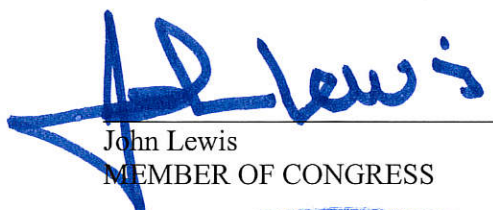
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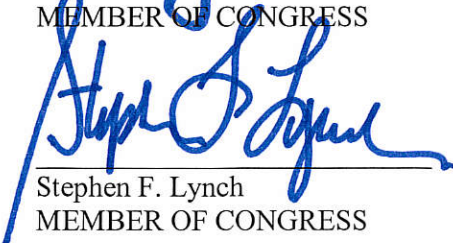
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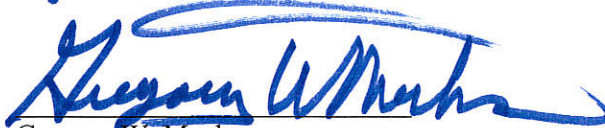
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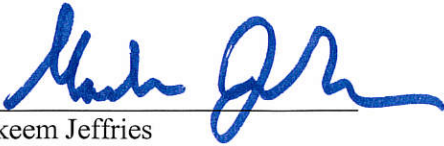

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